

NEWS RELEASE: 8th August 2011



New Angle Prize Awards - Crime wins!

The winner of the 2011 New Angle Prize for East Anglian literature worth £2,000 was announced last night at a special awards ceremony hosted by BBC Radio Suffolk presenter Lesley Dolphin at the Belstead Brook Hotel in Ipswich. Introducing the evening, Ms Dolphin said “it’s so valuable to be able to celebrate and highlight the work that’s been inspired by this wonderful part of the world”.

The judges Nicci Gerrard, Mark Cocker and Gill Lowe had set themselves a very difficult task selecting a shortlist selection of six very diverse works - all with strong connections to the East Anglian region.

Novelist Nicci Gerrard summarised all six works to an expectant audience before the overall winner’s envelope, was opened by Mr Brian Morron on behalf of the award sponsors Gotelee Solicitors.

And the winner is... “Death Watch” by Jim Kelly.

In the words of Nicci Gerrard “Death Watch is a baroque thriller and a psychologically compelling novel, urgent and compelling, whose labyrinthine plot reveals a terrifying darkness beneath the apparent calm of an East Anglian town”.

A delighted Jim Kelly said he was ‘flabbergasted’ at the award especially considering the quality of the other shortlisted books. He was very grateful that crime fiction, frequently overlooked in literary awards, was having its day. He spoke of the ‘edginess’ of East Anglia where human vulnerabilities can be explored against a backdrop of wide open landscapes and on the margins between land and sea. ‘Death Watch’ (the second in a trilogy of detective novels set in Kings Lynn) certainly exploits this edginess.

The **runner up**, awarded a prize of £500, was **Ronald Blyth’s latest work “Aftermath”**. The judges described this as “a collection of short pieces and extracts from previous works - calm, considered, wise, eloquent and above all kind: a fitting testimony to a life well-lived and beautifully narrated”.

Earlier in the evening, the result of a Readers’ Choice competition organised by the East Anglian Daily Times was announced by EADT editor Mr Terry Hunt. The popular choice was Maggi Hambling’s ‘The Scallop’, a personal account of the creative process behind, and the controversy caused by, the iconic sculpture on Aldeburgh beach.

The full list of shortlisted books was:

Aftermath by Ronald Blythe (Black Dog Books, 2010)

The Aldeburgh Scallop by Maggi Hambling (Full Circle Editions, 2010)

Death Watch by Jim Kelly (Penguin, 2010)

The Last Weekend by Blake Morrison (Chatto & Windus, 2010)

The Wake by Jeremy Page (Viking, Penguin 2009)

A Flora of Suffolk by MN Sanford & R J Fisk (Sanford & Fisk, 2010)

Notes for Editors

New Angle Prize for Literature

New Angle is a biennial award which was inaugurated in 2009 (previous winner 'Crow Country' by Mark Cocker). Worth £2,000 to the winner, the prize is offered for a recently published book "of literary merit associated with or inspired by East Anglia" (Norfolk, Suffolk or North Essex). The objective of the award is to celebrate and to encourage excellence in the regional literature of East Anglia.

2011 Judges:

Mark Cocker

Mark Cocker is an author, journalist and naturalist who writes regularly for The Guardian and The Times. He is well known in Britain for his work on wildlife. His eight books, include *Birders: Tales of a Tribe* and *Birds Britannica*, a hugely acclaimed study of the cultural importance of birds in his home country. His book *Crow Country* (2007) was shortlisted for the Samuel Johnson Prize for non-fiction and was awarded the inaugural New Angle Prize for East Anglian literature in 2009. He has travelled the world in search of wildlife and broadcasts on BBC Radio as well as lecturing and teaching regularly on the subjects of wildlife and nature writing.

Nicci Gerrard

Nicci Gerrard is a writer and journalist who lives in Suffolk. For many years she worked on The Observer, as a literary editor, an interviewer, a feature writer and executive editor. With her husband, Sean French, she has written thirteen best-selling psychological thrillers under the name of Nicci French. She also writes solo novels, the most recent of which is *The Winter House*.

Gill Lowe

Senior lecturer in the English department at University Campus Suffolk, Gill Lowe has worked as a teacher of English and Drama in secondary and further education. Her particular interests are textual analysis, short fiction, adaptation from text to screen and auto/biography. She has given papers at international conferences and taught creative writing for UEA, where she studied for a Masters in 'Life-writing'. Her dissertation led to the publication of a biographical monograph about Virginia Woolf's mother and an edition of *The Hyde Park Gate News* (the family newspaper of Virginia Stephen and her siblings).

Organisers

The New Angle Prize is organised by The Ipswich Institute, an independent charity offering educational courses, talks and visits as well as a well-stocked lending library. Membership is open to all who live or work in Ipswich and the surrounding area, for a moderate annual payment (see www.ipswichinstitute.org.uk). The Institute is a member of the Association of Independent Libraries.

New Angle Prize sponsors include Gotelee solicitors, and Scrutton Bland accountants.

Further detail available from Hugh Pierce on library@ipswichinstitute.org.uk or 01473 236160